

## **AMENDMENTS**

### **In the Claims**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Inserted language is underlined. Deleted language is denoted with a ~~strikethrough~~.

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A method for forming a gate stack having improved electrical properties in a gate structure forming process comprising the steps of:

providing a semiconductor substrate;  
forming a metal oxide layer over an exposed portion of the semiconductor substrate; and  
forming a silicon-containing electrode layer of ELECTRODE over the metal oxide layer in a nitrogen containing ambient.

Claims 2 - 4 (Withdrawn)

Claim 5 (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the metal oxide layer comprises a dielectric constant of greater than about 20.

Claim 6 (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the metal oxide is formed having a thickness of about 20 Angstroms to about 100 Angstroms.

Claim 7 (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gate stack including the metal oxide layer is formed to have a dielectric thickness equivalent to a silicon dioxide dielectric thickness of less than about 20 Angstroms.

Claim 8 (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the metal oxide is selected from the group consisting of tantalum oxides, titanium oxides, zirconium oxides, hafnium oxides, and yttrium oxides.

Claim 9 (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the metal oxide is formed from one of a metal-organic CVD method and an atomic layer deposition (ALD) method.

Claim 10 (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein an ozone containing oxidation process is carried out to treat the metal oxide layer following the formation of the metal oxide layer.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a layer comprising aluminum oxide is formed over the metal oxide layer ~~prior to forming the polysilicon layer~~.

Claim 12 (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the aluminum oxide layer is formed having a thickness of about 5 Angstroms to about 15 Angstroms.

Claim 13 - 32 (Withdrawn)